



**Food for Thought
From Your Employee Assistance Program**

Getting Ready For Summer

With summer just about here and it's time to put those summertime dreams into action. Whether you are planning a vacation or just staying around the house, making your summer stress-free can be a challenge. Here are some things to help you plan a fun, enjoyable, and safe summer:

Choose the Vacation that Fits Your Style (*and budget*)

Taking a vacation or small breaks during the summer months can help you re-energize, recuperate and renew. When you return to work you will feel more motivated, refreshed, and ready to take on work challenges. Here are some tips to consider when planning your summer vacation whether it is solo, with a friend, loved one, or children:

- Plan your vacation ahead of time. Think ahead of time about the activities you plan to do. This may help prevent arguments while on vacation. You can develop an activity list by checking the tourism section of the destination's brochure or web site.
- How about a mini-vacation? Many people prefer several mini-vacations to an extended vacation. Weekend trips can be very appealing to families with busy schedules or limited budgets.
- How about local day trips? You may find local day activities to be a great way to spend your summer. Some suggestions include: a day in a state park, museum, or local library, or just a relaxing at the pool, or visiting a friend or neighbor.

Plan Your Vacation

Preparing for vacation can be exhausting and time consuming. Here are some things that you can do ahead of time to make a safer and less stressful trip.

- If driving to your destination, have your car serviced ahead of time to avoid potential problems. Plan where and when breaks will be taken.



- Plan for potential emergencies. Have a medical first aid kit available, and any necessary emergency telephone numbers.
- Have some games and activities planned for the trip. Magnetic game boards, books, music, and educational games are some ideas.
- Prepare snacks that are nutritious and that are low in sugar.
- Prepare for all weather conditions. Check out the forecast for your destination. Plan and pack accordingly.

Plan Your Finances

A summer vacation can be a very expensive endeavor. The best way to plan your vacation is researching early, to determine what type of vacation you can afford within your budget.

- Start early. Being the “early bird” means getting the best bargains sometimes. The earlier you decide which type of vacation you want and your price range the better.
- Include vacation money in your financial planning. Open a separate vacation account. Talk to your banking representative to see what type of account best suits your needs.
- Shop around for the best bargain. If a price seems too good to be true, it probably is
- Use traveler’s checks. They are much safer than cash.
- Have spending limits and discuss these limits ahead of time. If children are part of your vacation consider giving them a vacation allowance. This lessens the number of financial requests from children and teaches responsibility.

Protect Your Home

Home safety is always important, but we do not always think about home safety when we are enjoying our vacation. Here are some ways to protect your home while you are away.

- Have good locks on all doors and windows and use them.
- Do not leave your house key hidden outside your home.
- Ask a neighbor to watch the house while you are away. Leave an address and telephone number with a neighbor so you can be reached in case of an emergency.
- Stop all deliveries, or arrange for a neighbor to pick up your mail.
- Plug in timers to turn lights, a radio or television on and off at appropriate times.
- Do not announce your absence on answering machines.



Find Stress-Free Summer Activities For Kids

For many families it is a struggle to balance the demands of adult work schedules with providing safe activities for children. Here are some suggestions to help you avoid hectic, stress filled summer days.

- Keep and display a family calendar. A calendar from the end of the school year to next fall listing the child's and family activities is a great way to organize new routines and schedules for the upcoming summer months. This gives children an idea of what is going on, and gives parents an idea of potential scheduling conflicts.
- Visit the library. Children and adults can participate in activities that include reading aloud, storytelling, and plays. Younger children may enjoy puppet shows, and arts and crafts activities. Many libraries may also offer training courses for computer programs for children of all ages.
- Enroll in a summer camp. There are many summer camps that have specific activities tailored to a child's interests and the parents needs. Overnight camps have varying activities and lengths of stay depending on the parent and child's comfort level. A day camp can help kids get away all day long, stay active and prevent the family budget from being busted.

- Choosing a camp. How do parents know which camp is best for their child? That depends on many different factors including the child's age, how easily he or she handles separation from the family, the child's interests and unique needs—and the parents own preferences. Day camp is typically the best choice for younger children because they can spend the day with other children their age and return to their own home and family at night. For parents considering sleep-away camps, it's best that the child be both old enough and emotionally ready for the experience. The American Camping Association and the National Camp Association recommend that a child be at least six years old to attend a residential camp. In addition, the child should possess a sense of independence, and the ability to adapt to nights away from home. Another strong indicator of readiness is when the child expresses an interest in going away to camp. To help prevent homesickness at sleep-away camps, parents should select a camp that is close to home. It is also a good idea, if possible, to consider having the child attend with a friend or relative. Another way for parents to smooth the transition to a sleep-away camp is to arrange for their child to contact another camper prior to attending camp (the director may be able to provide a list of names of campers who will be in the same cabin). This way, the child will know at least one other child when he or she arrives. Parents should remember that most children need a few days to adjust to being away from home, so they shouldn't panic if their child expresses homesickness the first few days of camp. Usually, homesickness fades with time, as a child makes friends and becomes comfortable in the camp's surroundings.

***For More Information, Please Contact
The DEA Employee Assistance Program
1-800-275-7460
202-307-8160***



Safety First This Summer: LifeCare Can Help!

Accidents happen, especially during the summer months! That's why it's important to pay special attention to safety measures at home, outdoors, and in the workplace. Fortunately, LifeCare®—an agency-paid—can help:

- **Call or log on to request free guides:**

- Protecting children
- Emergency preparedness
- Outdoor safety
- Safety for older adults
- Sunburn protection
- Internet and TV safety

- **Log on for tips, checklists, and in-depth info to help keep the whole family safe**

- **Learn how to childproof your home and get home safety tips for older adults**

- **Participate in an on-demand “Protecting Your Child” e-seminar**

- **Learn how to prepare for and cope with emergency situations**

Summer Safety Tips!

Log on and use the search tool to find quick tips and in-depth info:

- Search for “**summer safety**” for safety tips on bike riding, fireworks, swimming, hiking, and more.
- Search for “**heat exhaustion**” to learn why it is important to stay cool.
- Search for “**sunburn**” to get tips on preventing skin damage from the sun.
- Search for “**internet safety**” to learn how to protect your children from online predators
- Search for “**outdoor safety**” to learn how your kids can safely enjoy the outdoors this summer

Free Child Safety Kit!

- Request a free Child Safety Kit loaded with practical safety info
- Contains safety tips, *Pocket First Aid* book, travel first aid kit, sensor night light
- For parents of toddlers

LifeCare—brought to you by the DEA EAP—is provided at no cost to you!

Access LifeCare Online!

- Log on to www.lifecare.com and look for the “Member Login” box.
- Do not click on the “New User” link. Simply enter Screen Name: **usdoj** and Password: **dea**
- For assistance logging on, contact the Help Desk at 888-604-9565

Or Call Toll-Free — 24 hours a day!

- Call **800-873-4636** any time of the day or night. For TDD/TTY service, call 800-873-1322.

Protect Your Kids Online: LifeCare Can Help!

LifeCare, a DEA-paid benefit, now offers a FREE online safety solution, McGruff SafeGuard. This new service, available via the LifeCare web site:

Monitors Children's Internet Activity

McGruff SafeGuard intelligently monitors your child's Internet activity including:

- Web site visits
- Chat and instant messaging
- Search engine phrases
- Social network profiles (My Space, Facebook)
- Total number of hours spent online

Detects Dangerous Situations

The service helps parents detect dangerous online situations, including: dishonesty, sexual activity, alcohol and drug use, self-destructive behavior, threats, predators, and cyberbullying.

Provides Safety Alerts

McGruff SafeGuard sends parents alerts via e-mail that enable them to address risky/dangerous situations before they escalate.

And More!

The site also translates "kidspeak", blocks people from talking to your child and enables parents nationwide to network

Did You Know?....

- 35% of kids ages 8-17 have made friends online and 76% of teens visit social networking sites.
- Kids are spending an average of over 20 hours a month online.
- 71% of 13-17 year olds have received messages from strangers.
- 30% have considered meeting someone they've met online.
- 1 in 5 children using instant messaging has been approached by pedophiles. Only 1 in 4 told their parents.
- 65% of parents and 64% of all teens say that teens do things online they wouldn't want their parents to know about.

McGruff SafeGuard, accessible via the LifeCare web site, is provided at no cost to you!

Access LifeCare Online!

Log on to www.lifecare.com and look for the "Member Login" box!

Do not click on the "NEW USERS CLICK HERE" link. Simply enter

Screen Name: usdoj and Password: dea (case sensitive)

For assistance logging on to the web site, contact the Help Desk at 888-604-9565

